

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A digital contents sales method, wherein
a vending machine is provided with point information presentation means that presents prescribed point information to a user of the vending machine to correspond with a sales operation based on the insertion of a prescribed amount of money in the vending machine;
the presented point information is sent by the user to a center unit with identification information of the user;
points that correspond to the sent point information are stored and managed for the user by the center unit; and
digital contents are distributed to the user upon a request from that user for distribution of desired digital contents, based on points stored and managed for this user.
2. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the point information includes a module code relating to issue of the point information and a secret code that represents the points, and wherein, of these, at least the secret code is encrypted and presented to the user.
3. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the point information is presented by displaying the point information on a display unit in the vending machine.
4. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the point information is presented by printing the point information from the vending machine onto prescribed paper.
5. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the point information is

presented by transmitting the point information to communication equipment of the user through communication between the vending machine and the communication equipment.

6. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the point information is presented by previously attaching a printed material, onto which the point information has been printed, to a dummy product.

7. The digital contents sales method according to claim 5, wherein the communication equipment comprises a portable telephone set carried by the user, and input of the point information into the communication equipment is carried out using wired communication, wireless communication, infrared communication, or audio communication between the vending machine and the portable telephone set.

8. The digital contents sales method according to claim 2, wherein the secret code includes at least a point issue number, and the center unit determines whether or not the point information has been used twice based on the point issue number.

9. The digital contents sales method according to claim 2, wherein the module code comprises code information to identify the vending machine, and the center unit manages the status of the vending machine based on the module code.

10. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein the center unit manages a usage status of the user based on identification information for the user sent by the user.

11. The digital contents sales method according to claim 1, wherein upon request by the user, the center unit allows perusal by the user of point stored and managed for the user.

12. A digital contents sales system, comprising:

a vending machine having point information presentation means for presenting prescribed point information to a user of the vending machine to correspond with a sales operation based on insertion of a prescribed amount of money;

a center unit that stores and manages points corresponding to the point information for the user;

communication means for sending the point information together with identification information for the user to the center unit;

update means provided in the center unit for decrypting the point information sent using the communications means and updating the points that are stored and managed for the user by points corresponding to the point information; and

digital contents distribution means for distributing digital contents to the user based on the points stored and managed for the user.

13. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the point information includes a module code that identifies the vending machine and a secret code that relates to the points, and the point information presentation means, of the module code and the secret code, encrypts at least the secret code and presents the same to the user.

14. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the point information presentation means presents the point information to the user by displaying the point information on a display unit provided on the vending machine.

15. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the point information presentation means presents the point information to the user by printing the point information on a prescribed paper using printing means provided in the vending machine.

16. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the point information presentation means presents the point information to the user by transmitting the point information to communication equipment of the user by communication between the vending machine and the communication equipment.

17. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the point information presentation means presents the point information to the user by selling a dummy product to which a printed material on which the point information has been printed is previously attached.

18. The digital contents sales system according to claim 16, wherein the communication equipment includes a portable telephone set carried by the user, and the point information presentation means presents the point information to the user by transferring the point information to the portable telephone set using either wired, wireless, infrared, or audio communication.

19. The digital contents sales system according to claim 13, wherein the secret code includes at least a point issue number, and the center unit determines whether or not the point information has been used twice based on a point issue number included in the point information.

20. The digital contents sales system according to claim 13, wherein the center unit is provided with an equipment database that stores and manages the status of the vending machine in correspondence with the module codes.

21. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the center unit is provided with a user database that stores and manages the usage status of the system by the user in correspondence with identification information for the user sent by the user.

22. The digital contents sales system according to claim 12, wherein the center unit is provided with perusal means that, upon a request from the user, allows the user to peruse the point stored and managed for that user.